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ABSTRACT

At this 1972 conference, upper division and graduate students from nine western colleges submitted papers on the theory, history, and criticism of rhetoric. Three of them are published in this conference report, along with the principal address. In "Rhetorical Criticism as Argument," the principal address, Wayne Brockriede suggests that useful rhetorical criticism must function as argument whether that criticism is evaluation, an analysis of a rhetorical transaction, or an attempt to relate the analysis to general concepts or theories. Charles E. Heisler's paper, "The Rhetoric of Yippie: Rubin at Salt Lake," analyzes Jerry Rubin's address at Salt Lake City in February 1970 as a demonstration of the nonverbal, symbolic orientation of the Yippie protest rhetoric. In "The Implications of Phenomenological Hermeneutics for Rhetorical Criticism," Raymond N. Pedersen discusses modern theories of hermeneutics, the study of the general methods of textual explication as applied to rhetorical interpretation and criticism. In his paper, "Reader's Digest Rhetoric: How Sweet It Is," John Worcester analyzes the world view and subjects of the articles that the "Digest" publishes. (RN)

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CONFERENCE IN RHETORICAL CRITICISM

Commended Papers

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California State University, Hayward — 1972

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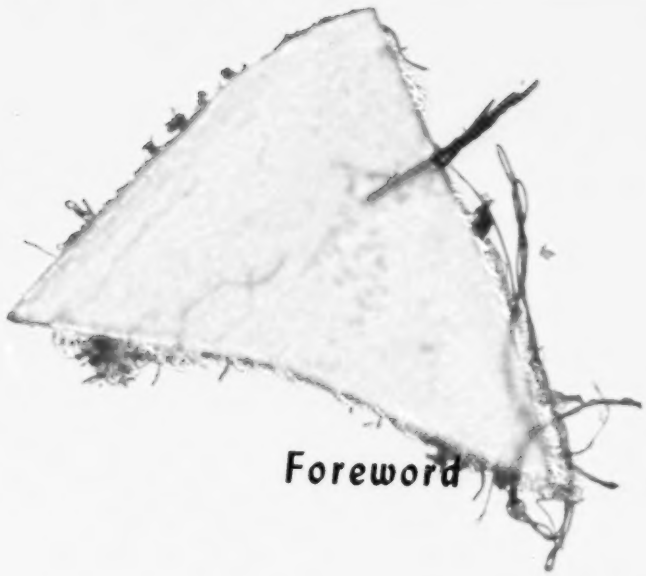

Foreword

Saturday, May 13, 1972, students and professors from nine western colleges and universities gathered for the sixth annual Cal-State Hayward Conference in Rhetorical Criticism. Upper division and graduate students presented papers on the theory, history, and criticism of rhetoric. In the morning, while the Editor-Critic professors silently reviewed the papers, the students enjoyed a Readers' Theatre performance, "There's No Business Like . . .," directed by Dr. Melvin R. White. In the afternoon, the students read their papers to panels, from which the three best papers of the conference were chosen for commendation and publication. These papers were then revised at the suggestion of this volume's editors and are herein included. The editors and sponsors of the Conference are indebted to the participating professors for their deliberation over the papers and for their critical comments.

The evening banquet featured Dr. Wayne Brockriede, Chairman of the Department of Communication and Theatre at the University of Colorado. His address, "Rhetorical Criticism as Argument," was introduced by Dr. Brockriede's former student, Dr. John C. Hammerback of the Department of Speech and Drama, California State University, Hayward. Dr. Brockriede's address is included in this volume.

We express special gratitude to Dr. Brockriede for his scholarly contribution to the Conference and for his participation in the events of the day.

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RHETORICAL CRITICISM AS ARGUMENT
by
Dr. Wayne Brockriede

One of the ways, and I think the best way, to become rhetorical critics is to do criticism. And it seems to me that some of our people who could do rhetorical criticism might be well advised to do that and to do less of the kind of thing I'm going to be doing tonight; namely, talking about rhetorical criticism. I apologize that what I'm going to be doing is this.

In talking about "Rhetorical Criticism as Argument," I want to make an argument of my own. Before I do, though, I should probably define the three key terms. By "criticism," I mean the act of evaluating or analyzing some object, event, or transaction. A person can function as a critic either by passing judgment on what was done, by analyzing what was done for the sake of better understanding that transaction, or by analyzing what was done for the purpose of relating it to some more general concept or theory.

Although the relationship between criticism and argument seems applicable to *any* object, event, or transaction, my focus tonight is on rhetorical criticism. I see rhetoric broadly as including written as well as spoken discourse, nonverbal as well as verbal symbols, movements as well as individual discourses, and functions other than those implied by a narrow conception of persuasion.

By "argument," I mean the process of inferring from what is believed some claim concerning something that is doubted or disbelieved. This concept of argument implies four necessary conditions: (1) an inferential leap from the believed to the doubted or disbelieved; (2) some more or less rational principle to justify the leap; (3) a choice among two or more competing claims; and (4) a reduction of uncertainty in favor of one of the claims – since an inferential leap is necessarily involved, uncertainty cannot be eliminated.

This definition of argument rules out three kinds of activities sometimes thought of as argument. One is the assertion of a truism or a true believer's insistence on some non-negotiable position. A second is the entailment of a conclusion through some automatic procedure of manipulating elements within a closed system, for example, a syllogism. Neither of these two activities constitutes an argument. If the claim is a foregone conclusion, one which for any of several reasons is not really open to dispute, then it has not been argued. It has not been argued since no inferential leap has been made, since only one claim is seen as possible, and since that claim is accepted with certainty. The third kind of pseudo-argument is the attempt by force or by cunning of conning other people into accepting what they have no reason for accepting. This activity is not argument since rationality is not invoked; it is more analogous to rape or seduction.

My argument tonight is that useful rhetorical criticism, whatever else it may be, must function as argument. It must function as argument whether the criticism is an evaluation, an analysis of a rhetorical transaction, or an attempt to relate that analysis to some more general concept or theory. I want to look at the relationship of argument to each of these three functions of criticism.

First, evaluative criticism. Some evaluative rhetorical criticism must be put into the nonargument category. When a critic merely appreciates the rhetoric or objects to it, without reporting any reasons for his like or dislike, he puts that criticism outside the realm of argument – unless the reader accepts the credentials of the critic as justifying the evaluation. The reader of an appreciation has no other rational basis for judging whether he should agree with the praise or blame. When a rhetorical critic aims at an evaluative function and fails to make an argument, his work is not useful beyond the simple report that Critic A makes Evaluation X.

On the other hand, when the evaluating critic has stated clearly the criteria he used in arriving at his judgment, perhaps together with the philosophic or theoretic foundation on which they rest, and when he has supplied some data to show that the rhetorical transaction meets or fails to meet the criteria he has used, then he has presented an argument. A reader then has several choices: he can accept or reject the data, he can accept or reject the criteria, and he can accept or reject the inferential leap that joins the two.

Such a critical evaluation meets all four of the conditions of being an argument. (1) An inferential leap is made from the data to the evaluative claim. (2) The leap is based on criteria which, if accepted, justifies accepting the claim. (3) The critic's claim can be compared with others that compete with it. (4) People responding to the evaluation can therefore reduce their uncertainty about their own evaluations.

The advantage of the evaluative argument over the evaluative nonargument is that the argument involves risk, invites confrontation, and establishes some degree of reliability in the judgment and in the reasons for that judgment, whereas the nonargument assumes the attitude of the Latin adage, "de gustibus non est disputandum," "about taste there is no disputing." A reader can take the nonargument or leave it; but even if he takes it, he has no good way of knowing whether the judgment he holds in common with the critic has the same or a different basis. But when the critic becomes an arguer and takes the risk of making a responsible judgment, he invites criticism of his criticism, he invites a reader to confront his judgment. If the evaluative argument meets the test of confrontation, some degree of intersubjective reliability has been established; because the critic's judgment is not altogether unique, he is operating on something other than pure whim. Not only has some reliability been established for the evaluative claim itself, but it has also been established with reference to the basis for the evaluation.

If the evaluative argument fails the test of confrontation, and if the arguments of the critic and the counterarguments of the respondent are clear enough, then the reason for the difference may be uncovered, the issue may be joined, and a debate over the difference may be instructive. Such a debate may either enhance an understanding of the transaction itself, or it may contribute to a better understanding of rhetorical theory, or both.

A second kind of criticism involves an analysis of the rhetorical transaction. Like evaluative criticism, this kind of criticism can also be argument or nonargument. Two kinds of analyses fail to meet the conditions of argument and hence have limited utility.

One nonargument analysis is pure description, whether a report of what a speaker said in a speech, a resume of a career of speaking, a narration of one or more transaction, or something of the sort. Unfortunately, much of twentieth-century public address criticism fits into this mold. As early as 1956 Albert J. Croft surveyed studies of rhetorical criticism, especially M.A. theses and Ph.D. dissertations, and discovered that studies often amounted merely to collections of "facts and opinions dealing with the biography of the speaker, the historical background of the speech, and the nature of the listening and reading audience . . . (and amount to inventories of) the speaker's propositions, as they occur in representative speeches."[1] The frequency of such descriptions has no doubt declined during the last sixteen years, but such criticisms are still written. Such collections of materials could be relevant, of course, to the development of an argument concerning how the rhetoric worked, but in descriptions the critic stops short of making an argument and merely presents his data in a kind of standard chronological or topical pattern.

The problem with the nonargument description is that the reader is left either with the so-what wonder of what the material is supposed to tell him or with the need to find his own argument if he can from the miscellaneous materials. Since presumably the reader knows less about the transaction and has less interest in it than the critic does, he has a hard job. Given the kind of unrelated tidbit details sometimes included in such criticism, a reader may find it virtually impossible to find an argument there. What the study adds up to is a failure to answer the so-what question. This leaves the reader justifiably wondering whether the critic has not abdicated his responsibility for making some sense of the transaction.

A second kind of analysis of a rhetorical transaction that also fails to meet the conditions of an argument is criticism by classification, of which neo-Aristotelian criticism is the prime example. This kind of criticism has come under heavy attack recently for a variety of reasons. But from the point of view I am advancing tonight, the really damaging weakness of neo-Aristotelian criticism by classification is that it makes no argument.

This claim requires some clarification since, at first thought, one might consider such criticism to constitute an argument. But one's second thought is that classification is only a pseudo-argument. For example, when a neo-Aristotelian critic seems to argue that his speaker used *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*, or that he used various stylistic devices – and then provides example of such usages, he makes no inferential leap; he is arguing within a closed system where the conclusion is predetermined by the nature of the system. As one of my associate editors for the *QJS* several years ago commented when I sought his advice on a manuscript that consisted of neo-Aristotelian criticism, "Of course, old so-and-so used *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*. What else could he use?" Once a critic buys a category system, whether Aristotle's or anyone else's, and once he makes an *a priori* decision to apply it to a speech, he is merely engaging in a form of self-fulfilling prophecy; he finds examples of things he knew all along he was going to find, and all he has to do is to put them into appropriate cubbyholes. Such use of a category system tells a reader very little about the rhetorical transaction or about rhetoric. The critic has done no real thinking.

[1] "The Functions of Rhetorical Criticism," *QJS*, XLII (October 1956), 283.

He has done nothing beyond classification. He has made no argument.

A third kind of analysis of a rhetorical transaction is explanation. Whereas the evaluative critic passes judgment on what happened, the explanatory critic tries to account for what happened and why it happened by reference to some more general concept. Explanatory analyses, unlike those of description and classification, necessarily become arguments. An explanation is a critic's attempt to make sense of a transaction, to account for the way the rhetoric works, and to argue the superiority of that account. Although the critic may arrive at his explanations through a variety of procedures and with the help of various concepts and category systems, three principles seem to characterize critical explanations and turn them into arguments, and therefore useful criticism. These three principles sharply differentiate the explanation from the description, and two of them differ from classification.

First, criticism by explanation requires a comparison between the transaction and some concept or category system. Such schemes may already be in existence and ready to be used, or they may be invented by the critic. The critic says, in effect, that what illuminates the rhetorical transaction he is studying, or some portion of it, is some general idea about rhetoric. He may get his idea from various sources. The skillful and experienced critic has a battery of searchlights available from which to choose the ones that can help him light up his rhetorical transaction. Without some comparison between the transaction and some set of ideas, the critic can only describe what happened. If he places his transaction into the context of some more general set of ideas, the critic can go beyond description into classification or explanation.

A second principle distinguishes explanation from classification. Classification relates the transaction to a category system in a compulsive, deductive, *a priori* way. Before he starts his work, the classifying critic selects the system he will use, operates it as a mold, and pours into it the data he gets from his investigation of the transaction. The explaining critic, on the other hand, proceeds inductively and selects his concepts categories, and dimensions *after* he has studied the transaction, taking pains to pick those most appropriate for his purposes. With a head full of possible ideas to apply, he looks carefully at what he is criticizing and chooses those ideas that best help him understand the object of his criticism. After making that choice, he is ready to argue the convincingness of his explanatory claim; he is ready to relate data from the transaction to the concepts he has selected.

The third principle of rhetorical criticism by explanation also sets it apart from criticism by classification. The critic makes his explanatory argument by marrying data from the transaction with some general concept or category system. In doing this, he makes *active* use of both partners and creates an interaction between them. The explanation is a product of inferences that grow from that interaction. In criticism by classification, the category system sits like a series of passive receptacles waiting for someone to pour in the data. In criticism by explanation, on the other hand, the concepts and the data behave as if alive and reach out and actively couple themselves to conceive the explanatory claim.

Explanatory criticism is necessarily an argument; it meets all four of the conditions of argument I set forth earlier. First, the claim cannot be reached without an inferential leap. Second, the idea that certifies that leap gives a reader some rational justification for making it. Third, the resulting explanation must compete with alternative explanations. Fourth, since an inferential leap has been made, the explanation can have no claim to certainty, but to the extent that the argument is convincing it can reduce a reader's uncertainty about the transaction. The result is that the reader of explanatory criticism understands better the rhetorical transaction being criticized.

So far I have talked about two functions of critisism. Evaluative criticism becomes an argument and gains utility if and only if the critic makes clear the criteria on which he is basing his judgment. Analytic criticism comes in three varieties, two of which are not arguments. Description cannot become an argument since its data are related to no concepts or category system that could generate an inferential leap to some claim that goes beyond the data. Classification fails as an argument because the critic functions within a closed category system that does not tolerate inferential leaps. Only explanation meets the conditions of becoming an argument and hence can create knowledge about the transaction.

The function of a third type of criticism is to relate one's analysis of a rhetorical transaction to some general concept or set of concepts for the purpose of making a contribution to an understanding of rhetoric itself. This type of criticism, like criticism by explanation, is necessarily an argument. The two types differ only in their goals and in the direction of the arrow. Both kinds of criticism require an interaction between the data of a rhetorical transaction and a general concept of rhetoric. In criticism by explanation the goal is to increase one's understanding of the rhetorical transaction, and the arrow points from concept to transaction. In the third general type of criticism the goal is to understand rhetoric better, and the arrow points from transaction to concept.

I must confess that I can find no altogether satisfactory name for this third type of criticism. Although it aims in the direction of developing a science or theory of rhetoric, to call it scientific criticism or theoretical criticism somehow seems too grand. This third type of criticism can make only a modest contribution to generalizations that one day may find their way into theo-

retical systems. The essential principle of Type III criticism is to generalize a concept beyond the transaction under study. It may aim at increased confidence in our present knowledge about rhetoric, or it may aim at a refinement of that knowledge.

Type III criticism has one of two purposes, it can validate present concepts and it can discover new ones. Both forms require an argument. The critic who validates present concepts argues that a study of one transaction can support a theoretical position or some generalization within such a theory.

Perhaps an example of critical validation of a concept would clarify the kind of argument it makes. In his study of the presidential campaign of 1860, Don Beck wondered whether the social judgment-ego involvement approach to attitude theory of Muzafer Sherif and his associates could explain what happened to Stephen A. Douglas during the campaign.[2] Sherif predicted that ego-involved persons distort messages in one of two ways. If a message is close to someone's position, he will tend to *assimilate* it in the direction of his own position. If a message is too distant to assimilate, the ego-involved person will tend to *contrast* it and see it as even more distant from his own position than it is.

By examining newspaper accounts and other evidence of reactions in the north and in the south to the speaking of Douglas, Beck supported his hypothesis that one explanation for some of Douglas' difficulties in the campaign was that ego-involved auditors contrasted him. Many northerners saw Douglas not as taking a moderate position somewhere between those assumed by Lincoln and by Breckenridge; rather, they contrasted him as a southern sympathizer little better than Breckenridge. Many southerners saw Douglas not as a moderate but as an abolitionist little better than Lincoln.

Beck concluded that ego-involved auditors in 1860 behaved as the Sherif formulation a century later might have predicted they would. Beck's study is an excellent example of the close relationship between criticism by explanation and Type III criticism of the validation variety. These kinds of criticism require similar arguments; both involve an active interaction between an interpretation of the transaction and a proposition that generalizes beyond that transaction. Only the emphasis differs. Beck, as explainer, accounts for one rhetorical dimension of the transaction between Stephen A. Douglas and his northern and southern audiences by looking at it through the lens of Sherif's approach to attitude theory. As Type III critic, Beck provides a bit of validation for Sherif's approach by showing its applicability to Stephen A. Douglas' 1860 presidential campaign. The primary difference between explanation and validation lies in determining whether the emphasis should be placed on the transaction or on the rhetorical concept.

[2] "The Rhetoric of Conflict and Compromise: A Study in Civil War Causation" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1966).

A second form of Type III criticism aims at discovering new generalizations or at refining present ones. Critical discoveries may result when critical validations fail. If a critic finds that some of his interpretations and explanations for a rhetorical transaction are not consistent with theoretical expectations, he may be interested in finding new theoretical formulations that are. Since the current theoretical position cannot account for the transaction, he hypothesizes a concept that can explain it.

Again an example may help clarify Type III discoveries. When criticizing the structure of the Truman Doctrine speech of 1947, Bob Scott and I observed that the speech did not follow the traditional model of a logical brief.[3] In that model each major contention supports directly the proposition; each contention, in turn, is supported by arguments and subarguments; and these, finally, are supported by evidence. Furthermore, a speaker is expected to say everything he is going to say about one topic before proceeding to the next. Judged by that model, the structure of Truman's speech is chaotic and confusing, and Truman violates over and over again the principle of putting all of an argument in one place.

We wondered whether a model derived from the concept of musical counterpoint might more appropriately explain, in part, how Truman's auditors could have responded positively to a speech structured as it is. Contrapuntal form may be defined as the combination of "two or more melodic lines in a musically satisfying way."[4] Each of the melodic lines may recur several times in a musical composition in company with different combinations of other themes that also come and go. We identified ten themes in Truman's speech and viewed them as threads that developed horizontally in several places, combining with a variety of other themes that also developed similarly. After tracing the argument-threads we engaged in some speculation about the extent to which speeches structured along the contrapuntal model could have significant and salutary effects on understanding, attitude change, and behavioral influence.

We thought several factors might point to the effectiveness of a contrapuntal structure. Many short exposures to parts of an argument may under some conditions be more effective than one long exposition of a complete argument. In addition, the juxtaposition of an argument into a variety of contexts that included references to highly compatible attitudes may enhance its effectiveness. Furthermore, the slow and gradual unfolding of an argument may give it a suspense and a momentum that might result in a cumulative effect.

[3] *Moments in the Rhetoric of the Cold War* (New York: Random House, 1971), pp. 27-36.

[4] Kent Kenna, *Counterpoint: Based on Eighteenth-Century Practice* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1959), p. 2.

Finally, by exposing an auditor to bits and pieces of an argument, a speaker may encourage him to feel a sense of interest, participation, and involvement he would not feel if he were handed the fully developed argument in one continuous passage.

In short, our study hypothesizes a new approach to an understanding of the structure of rhetorical discourse and invites others to confront and pursue its possibilities. It also perhaps illustrates the close relationship between criticism by explanation and Type III criticism of the discovery sort. One view of our study is that we tried to explain the structural dimension of the Truman Doctrine speech by a metaphoric reference to a new way of looking at the structure of speeches. Another view, different only by emphasis, is that we speculatively hypothesized a different way of looking at speech structure and tried to argue that possibility by examining one instance. The utility of Type III critical discoveries is that the critic argues the possibility of new concepts or revised concepts and may open the way to further research that may confirm or disconfirm it.

I have tried to discuss the role of argument in various kinds of criticism. I have argued that some kinds of criticism are nonarguments, for example, evaluative appreciation, description, and classification; and that other kinds are necessarily arguments, for example, evaluations in which criteria are specified and used, explanations, Type III validations, and Type III discoveries. What remains for me to do now is to assume my responsibility for making explicit my primary argument, that critical arguments are more useful than critical nonarguments. My argument rests on two advantages.

First, critical arguments are more informative than critical nonarguments. What one learns from an appreciation is only that some critic has pronounced some judgment about some transaction. What one learns from a description is only that certain raw data are available and that possibly they may be ordered so something else can be learned. What one learns from a classification is the unsurprising fact that certain kinds of data can be dumped into certain kinds of bins.

On the other hand, a reader learns from an argued evaluation the grounds on which that judgment rests. He learns from an explanation that a critic's interpretation is worth considering and comparing with others he has encountered or can conceive so his own understanding of that transaction can be enhanced. A reader can learn from a Type III validation that a current concept of rhetoric is supported by one additional bit of data and that he can retain that concept with a little more confidence. He can learn from a Type III discovery either that a current concept of rhetoric may need revision or that a different concept should be entertained and investigated. In short, the kinds of criticism that involve arguments can teach the reader either something about a rhetorical transaction or about rhetoric itself or about both.

Second, when a critic assumes the responsibility and risk of arguing an explanation of a rhetorical transaction or of generalizing beyond that explanation, he invites confrontation that may initiate or continue a process that can improve our collective understanding of rhetorical transactions or of rhetoric. The evaluative appreciater provides nothing to confront except to invite a reader to say "taint" in response to the critic's "tis." What else is there to dispute? The describer gives a reader nothing to confront except the accuracy of the descriptions, and this kind of confrontation cannot lead very far to useful knowledge beyond the Trivia Bowl. The classifier can be confronted only with the appropriateness of his system and with the appropriateness of his sortings, and this kind of confrontation goes to no useful place I can think of.

But when an argument is advanced either about a particular rhetorical transaction or about a general concept of rhetoric, the reader can confront it usefully. If he tries to disconfirm the critic's argument and fails to do so, the reliability of that argument is increased. If he can disconfirm the critic's argument, that argument must be abandoned or revised. The product of the process of confrontation by argument and counter-argument, whether in studies of rhetorical criticism or other kinds of research, is a more dependable understanding of rhetorical transactions and of rhetoric.

THE RHETORIC OF YIPPIE: RUBIN AT SALT LAKE

by

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Although rhetorical critics of the new left movement have recently begun to explore the strategies, precedents, and impact of the Yippie Movement,[1] no critic has yet investigated the speeches of the leaders of the movement. By this omission, the critics have overlooked unique facets of Yippie rhetoric which offer rich insights into the sound and fury of the New Left as it evolved in the late 1960's. Although space does not allow a complete analysis of all aspects of Yippie speech-making, this paper will explore one typical example of the genre: Jerry Rubin's Salt Lake City address of February, 1970. Rubin's speech demonstrates the non-verbal, symbolic orientation of the Yippie movement's protest rhetoric.

The Yippie movement was conceived in 1967 from a discussion involving Jerry Rubin, Abbie Hoffman, and Paul Krassner – all leading figures in the New Left movement.[2] Yippie organized to provide a tenable framework of involvement for the "hippie" element of the youth culture at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago in 1968. The movement was the vehicle within which "hippies" could participate in the demonstrations being planned for the convention without associating themselves with more politically oriented youth groups organizing for Chicago.

The Yippie movement differed from the many New Left groups (SDS, New Mob, Young Socialists) in the largely symbolic and non-rational nature of the Yippie rhetoric. Rhetorical strategies of Yippie are generally non-verbal and have relied upon a deft manipulation by Yippie speakers of the mass media, especially television, to promulgate and solidify the movement's following. Usually, Yippie leaders plan this manipulation to create a new, though perhaps distorted view of the relationship between the Establishment and the young. Yippies present this relationship in terms of a conflict between right and left, old and young, and they use tactics which insure wide coverage by the electronic press.

When the Yippies believe they can show the Establishment to be functionally inept or repressive, they try to force reaction. This reaction by the Establishment is vital to the rhetorical strategies of the Yippies. Jerry Rubin proclaims that "a movement cannot grow without repression," and that the Yippies must invite this repression from the Establishment.[3]

From their beginning, the Yippies have used "guerrilla theatres," defined by theatre historian Richard Schechner as "symbolic action,"[4] as a vital ingredient in their rhetorical repertoire. There have been several examples of these "theatres" in the short Yippie history: tossing money from the balcony of the stock exchange in New York, staging a mock drug raid on the campus of SUNY Stoneybrook, and nominating a pig (Pigasus) for president at Chicago.

When Yippie action invites official reaction in the form of arrests, or, as in Chicago, violent confrontation, the Yippies use this reaction to substantiate their claim that the Government is repressive. In the case of the Chicago confrontation, this reasoning is explained syllogistically by Bower and Ochs: Chicago acts as the United States acts; Chicago acts brutally and oppressively; therefore, the United States acts brutally and oppressively.[5]

If Yippie theatrics do not result in confrontation, then the effect is simply to mock the particular system being demonstrated against. At Wall Street, by burning and throwing away money, the Yippies created a situation described by Schechner as a "vulgar comedy," which

> operates under the sanction of a "moral holiday" when the austere values of dignity are suspended and the obverse and perverse triumph. The young take over from the old; prodigality laughs away prudence; promiscuity

[1] See, for example John Waite Bower and Donovan J. Ochs, *The Rhetoric of Agitation and Control* (Reading, 1971), pp. 57-72; Herbert W. Simmons, "Requirements, Problems, and Strategies: A Theory of Persuasion for Social Movements," *QJS*, LVI (February, 1970), 1-11; Theodore Otto Windt, Jr., "The Diatribe: Last Resort for Protest," *QJS*, LVIII (February, 1972), 1-14.

[2] Jerry Rubin, *Do It* (New York, 1970), p. 81.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 250.

[4] "Guerrilla Theatre: May 1970." *The Drama Review*, XIV (T47, 1970), 163.

[5] Bower and Ochs, p. 75.

replaces marriage; the ugly takes place beside beauty; the poor become rich.[6]

This mockery is a symbolic rejection of the values of the specific institution singled out as victim. If the Yippies achieve reaction by the institution, as in Chicago, that institution is invalidated because it no longer adheres to its own precepts and becomes contradictory; that is, democracy becomes repression, freedom of speech becomes censorship. If the institution does not react, the institution is weak, unable to defend its principles and is therefore ludicrous. New Left commentator Marshall A. Cohen notes that "if a youth cannot take life seriously, it will be difficult for him to take a place in this society."[7] In either case – mockery or confrontation – the demonstrations are triumphant.

In Rubin's Salt Lake City address, he clearly attempts to bring the tactics of guerrilla theatre to the public speaking event. This reconstruction of a physical rhetorical strategy into the verbal context is necessitated by Rubin's belief that "what changes people is the emotional involvement of action."[8] To supply this action, Rubin as the speaker, limited by the speaker-audience relationship, must create for the audience scenes that might be seen in an actual "guerrilla theatre" event. What results is a unique combination of highly symbolic gestures and pictorial language that conveys distorted images of the institutions of the Establishment that Rubin unremitingly assaults, Logical argumentation is rejected entirely by Rubin, who explains that "a speech is not an exchange of information – it is an emotional event."[9] Always seeking this emotional involvement in the audience, Rubin creates and directs his personal theatrical events and draws his own conclusions from these events. No matter how illogical the reasoning that leads to the denouement, the scene always concludes with the same result – invalidation of the institution under attack.

The central "repressive" institution attacked by Rubin in his Salt Lake City speech is the federal court in Chicago, which, at the time of the speech, was trying Rubin and six other co-defendants on conspiracy charges stemming from the confrontation at the Democratic convention. Rubin's visual and verbal assault begins when he enters the platform wearing a judge's robe and a painted face, proclaiming:

> I am no longer Jerry Rubin. I am now Judge Rubin. All you got to do to be a judge is go to a costume store. It costs $25.00 a day to rent these black robes and you become a judge.[10]

Rubin then assaults the Chicago Seven trial:

> On Friday, Abbie [Hoffman] and I brought these robes and we walked in with our coats on so we wouldn't be stopped by the federal marshal, and as soon as we got close enough so Julius could see us, we ripped off the coats and underneath we became judges. We shouted out, "you see, there are two judges down here, judge, so there's only one judge up there." You see, I don't think that a human being can put on robes and all of a sudden become the judge; and decide whether you are fit to be on the streets or in jail.[11]

With this opening stagecraft Rubin sets the pattern of his speech. He verbally recreates a scene that actually occurred at the Chicago trial, and then makes the symbol of the judiciary (the robe) into the only criterion for judgeship. Thus, Rubin has reduced all qualifications for legal opinion into a physical symbol. Concluding with a hyperbolic twist, Rubin disqualifies that symbol because it is physical only. He quickly follows this passage with another scene designed specifically to show the repressive nature of the federal court in sentencing David Dellenger for shouting "bullshit" in the courtroom. Rubin argues:

> He was put in jail without bail because he shouted out the word "bullshit" which is probably the most common word in the English language. . . . It was the word that was on everybody's lips. And for being human and shouting it out, Dave Dellenger is right now in Cook County jail.[12]

Rubin's self-righteous outrage is caused by a tenuous link between the commonality of the word "bullshit," the commonality of the feelings assumed to be felt by everyone, and the court's repression of those feelings. Although absurd, Rubin's reasoning attempts to draw a dichotomy between the forces of evil (the court) and those of human feelings (the defendants).

Rubin follows the argument with a devastating visual portrait designed to ridicule Judge Hoffman:

> We used to call Julius Hoffman "Magoo," cause he looks like a cartoon character. You can't believe him. He is about four foot ten. You don't see him – the door opens . . . "everybody please rise" . . . everybody has to stand up when the man in the black robes

[6] "Speculations on Radicalism, Sexuality, and Performance," *The Drama Review*, XIII (Summer, 1969), 104.

[7] "The New Left as an American Opposition Group: Its History and Prospects for the Future" *The Activist*, XXIV (Spring, 1970), 11.

[8] *Do It*, p. 249.

[9] Jerry Rubin, *We Are Everywhere* (New York, 1971), 222.

[10] Jerry Rubin, "Salt Lake City Address," Speech delivered at the University of Utah, Salt Lake City, February 8, 1970. Tape recording and transcript by Blane Elswood for The John Birch Society, Salt Lake City.

[11] *Ibid.*

[12] *Ibid.*

comes in. And you really don't see him until all of a sudden he just appears above the bench. He sits on about four telephone books [laughter] and he's pure sadism in action.[13]

Rubin finally turns the "word pictures" into theatre when he rips the robe to pieces, and, gesturing, shouts:

> Here's what I think of courts. And jails, and Julius Hoffman, and all judges that put black people in jail, and put Yippies in jail, that put long-hairs in jail.[14]

Thus, the Chicago court and the whole court system is reduced by Rubin to an inhuman vehicle of repression. By punctuating the word pictures with the theatrics of destroying the robe and gesturing (presumably obscenely), he rejects the court. By reducing Judge Hoffman to a cartoon character, Rubin effectively dehumanizes his main adversary at Chicago. In effect, he "televises" the court proceedings for his audience; and, as the scene unfolds, the revolutionaries become romantic heroes who make a mockery of the symbolic, inhuman court.

Perhaps the most vivid word scene is Rubin's description of the courtroom:

> I'll describe that there's two tables, and the jury, and then the press; and then the audience; and one table is the prosecution table. Everything there is very up-tight and anal. Four men, the two prosecutors – a – the justice department guy named Cavich . . . and then the FBI agent named Stanley. I mean everything is so neat! Everything's in nice piles, and suits and ties, and it's rich and tight; and I pay attention and every time one of our witnesses sits on the stand, Stanley yawns and tiptoes out and comes back several minutes later with a new little folder – a file on the witness you know – found with the FBI computer. And our table is like at the end of day; it's a be-in. We read *Candy*, we spend all day reading our fan mail, cutting things out – taking pictures of the judge – it freaks him when you make a face. Julius says: "Look at the expression on that defendant's face! Never in my seventy years have I ever seen defendants like this!" It shows that even at the age of 75 you have new experiences. Everybody's always having new experiences. The judge says that. The prosecutor gets up and says, "Never in our forty years have we seen lawyers like this, defendants like this, such disrespect." You know, and we get up and we say, "Never in our ten years as agitators have we ever seen judges like this, and lawyers like this."[15]

Rubin carefully draws his word imagery to describe the action as well as the dialogue, and the imagery depicts an almost childlike irreverance in the defendants. While the tidy, efficient, "up-tight" prosecution works to convict the defendants, Rubin and company loll about, reading and making faces at the judge. As the prosecutors verbally attack the defendants, the defendants repeat their very words to mock the assault. Again, innocence is contrasted with evil.

Throughout much of the speech Rubin digresses from his attack on the court to make minor assaults on religion, parenthood, schools, and the "Establishment" in general. One illogical argument follows another and charge after charge is leveled at the institutions singled out by Rubin. The church is "the father of racism in America" and "America's soul is tinged with racism" because black people were brought over as slaves . . . and more black people died on ships on the way to the United States than Jews died in Nazi Germany."[16] Schools are just "like concentration camps for kids."[17] To prove that parents oppress their children, Rubin charges that "Spiro [Agnew] locked Kim [his daughter] up in the bathroom the day when 500,000 people came to Washington [for the October 15, 1969 war moratorium]."[18] In each of these statements, Rubin makes no attempt to support his arguments. He merely makes the assertion, offers loosely related examples as support, and moves to the next charge.

Considering the logical weakness of Rubin's arguments and the exaggerated distortions of his word scenes, it is reasonable to ask, was the speech effective; did it evoke the desired emotional response from the audience?

According to the *Salt Lake Tribune*,[19] Rubin received an enthusiastic standing ovation, indicating at least a modicum of passionate acceptance from those present. But, his most important achievement in the speech came at the expense of an equally emotional but less acclamatory audience – the audience of reaction.

In one of Rubin's more fanciful passages, the Yippie leader asserts:

> I just said at a press conference that the Yippies are moving their national office to Salt Lake City. You're going to get dope, sex, and riots. Eldridge Cleaver is now living in Salt Lake City. The Black Panthers are also moving their offices to Salt Lake City; and they're going to integrate the Mormon Church.[20]

Although these absurdities were specifically refuted in the *Salt Lake Tribune*,[21] some elements in the Utah

[13] *Ibid.* Audience reactions and gestures by Rubin indicated parenthetically in printed transcript.

[14] *Ibid.*

[15] *Ibid.*

[16] *Ibid.*

[17] *Ibid.*

[18] *Ibid.*

[19] February 9, 1970, p. 15.

[20] "Salt Lake City Address." *Ibid.*

[21] February 9, 1970, p. 15.

community apparently believed that the area would soon be invaded by radical groups. On February 23, two weeks after the speech, an editorial in the *Salt Lake Tribune* "regretfully" reported the appearance of "vigilante strike forces" in Salt Lake City.[22] A news article on the same date noted that

> . . . Kenneth Hare of Fillmore, Commander of the Jeep Posse, said of the riot training, "What would you do if you were down here and a bunch of those Black Panthers came down here to take over the town?"
>
> Referring to the "hippies" and "Black Panthers," he said, "You can never tell when it's going to happen, the way the country's going today."[23]

In the next few weeks, the *Salt Lake Tribune* chronicled the "growth" or "developments" of the vigilante groups until, on March 10, 1970, the "Neighborhood Emergency Teams" disbanded. A vigilante leader stated that the teams were organized to

> . . . call the local citizens . . . and alert them to the problems rapidly developing in this nation . . . to bring the extent of our unpreparedness to the attention of our local authorities . . . to expose the extent of bias of the news media and the local smear of the N.E.T. programs which support the police and local authorities as compared to the treatment given to Jerry Rubin who publically advocates the overthrow of all authority and the destruction of the local police.[24]

Newsweek claimed that armed vigilante groups patrolled the streets of Salt Lake City, specifically as a reaction to Rubin's speech.[25] Thus, Rubin was able to draw from the Salt Lake community the type of repressive gesture that validates his claim that "a dying empire turns toward repression, turns toward punishment and fear to preserve its power."[26]

In Salt Lake City, Rubin took the symbolic rhetoric of the Yippie guerrilla theatre to his audience in a speaking format. Using "word pictures," Rubin portrayed what the guerrilla theatre provokes – repression as a constant tool of a dehumanized, ludicrous Establishment. Finally, Rubin was able to provoke from the Salt Lake community the repressive agents that, after the address, reinforced his main assertion.

[22] Editorial, p. 14.

[23] *Salt Lake Tribune*, p. 5

[24] *Ibid.* March 10, 1970, p. 13.

[25] April 18, 1970, 93.

[26] *Do It*, p. 242.

THE IMPLICATIONS OF PHENOMENOLOGICAL HERMENEUTICS FOR RHETORICAL CRITICISM

by

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In 1970, The National Development Project on Rhetoric, originated and sponsored by the Speech Communication Association, attempted to define the nature, scope, and expectations of the field of rhetoric – on behalf of both students of rhetoric and its practitioners. The Project's Committee on the Advancement and Refinement of Rhetorical Criticism concluded that:

> Rhetorical criticism is to be identified by the kinds of questions posed by the critic. This position involves a shift in traditional emphasis from identifying it by the material studied to identifying it by the nature of the critic's inquiry. . . . So identified, rhetorical criticism may be applied to any human act, process, product, or artifact which, in the critic's view, may formulate, sustain or modify attention, perception, attitudes or behavior.[1]

The traditional division of fields of criticism according to the type of material being examined, especially in the study of written texts, made specialists out of the literary critic, the Bible interpreter and the rhetorical critic. Recognition of the common ground shared by these textual interpreters led to a study of general methods of textual explication, which became designated "hermeneutics" or "general hermeneutics." It started as a search for general methods for interpreting texts and eventually led to inquiries into the exact nature of the act of interpretation itself. In as much as a fundamental operation in rhetorical criticism is understanding, or interpreting, a text or an activity, significant developments in the field of hermeneutics are likely to have a direct bearing on the operation of rhetorical criticism.

One of the two main trends in contemporary hermeneutical theory is the attempt to view the event of interpretation from the viewpoint of German phenomenology (which tries to encounter a given phenomenon without any prior assumptions about how it ought to appear). Richard E. Palmer's recent book, *Hermeneutics*, uses the phenomonologist's approach to hermeneutics as the base for an attack on what he feels to be the shortcomings of contemporary American literary criticism. Palmer does not invent his own ammunition, but rather borrows it from Hans-Georg Gadamer, a preeminent contemporary German phenomenologist. Palmer takes exception to the entire Western tradition of "scientific," "realistic," and "objective" modes of understanding the world, especially as these tendencies are exemplified by the so-called New Criticism. He faults American literary criticism for viewing the "art object" as something that somehow exists "out there," by itself – an "object" to be classified, objectified, analyzed, etc. Over against the methods derived from this viewpoint, Palmer sets his representation of Gadamer's dialectical method.[2]

This dialectical method is Gadamer's response to what he identifies as three main determinants of the the nature of human existence; namely 1) the pervasiveness of the phenomenon of interpretation, 2) the linguisticality of human existence, and 3) the historicality of language and therefore, of human existence.

Palmer explains that interpretation does not merely involve explication of texts. It determines practically everything one does in his daily life. One is "interpreting" from the time you wake up in the morning (when you interpret the configuration of the clock's hands in terms of how fast you will have to hurry in order to arrive at work on time) until you go to sleep at night. Even an animal interprets the meaning of a piece of food for its hungry stomach. We exist by interpreting.

[1] Lloyd F. Bitzer and Edwin Black, eds., *The Prospect of Rhetoric* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1971), p. 220.

[2] Gadamer's single tome, *Warheit und Methode*, is not currently available in English, so his theory is discussed in this paper only as it is transmitted by Palmer's quotations, paraphrases and explanations.

The most powerful, versatile and important medium of human interpretation is language. Palmer joins Gadamer in asserting that "Language shapes man's seeing and his thought – both his conception of himself and his world. . . . His very vision of reality is shaped by language."[3] Indeed, "language is the 'medium' in which we live, and move, and have our being."[4]

History, too, is intimately connected with language and with being – but history understood not as a collection of dates and facts out of the past, but as a stream in which humanity moves. Man, at the present time, is the product of everything that Man has been, and done, up to now. Future Man will be the product of everything Man has been and done up to that point. And the medium of history is language.

Interpretation or understanding, for hypothetical pre-language man, was personal, immediate and momentary. The first event of "shared understanding," the first communication event, implied language of some kind, which in turn implies expansion of "the world" from what is immediately perceivable by one man to what is perceivable by all men – and not only by men who may be in other places at the same time, but also by men of other times, as the old pass their understandings to the young (limited, of course, by the extent to which these perceptions of the world can be transmitted by language). So language creates history.

When a critic encounters an historically transmitted text, he is reaching from one point in the chaotic stream of history to another point in the same stream. This is an important concept, because it means that there is no way to get out of the stream. We are all part of the history of humanity.

On the other hand, being "objective" about something in the stream implies being able to get outside the stream to look at it. The stance of objectivity is the target of Palmer's objection to New Criticism: if language is historical, then objectivity toward a work of language can only be pretense. The objectivity referred to here applies not merely to the intention of the critic, but also to the very act of considering the speech or work of art as an "object" to be looked "at." Every interpreter possesses buried as well as overt personal attitudes, critical attitudes, ways of looking at the world, in short a multitude of mostly invisible and practically unavoidable presuppositions which serve to prestructure his approach to the work. Some portion of the interpreter's "world" will always be invisible to him and unamenable to his conscious control.

[3] Richard E. Palmer, *Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schliermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1969), p. 9.

[4] *Ibid.*

At this point the critic is apt to ask two pertinent questions: 1) What do I do with a text if I can't look at it and examine it? and 2) Once I have figured out whatever it is that I am doing with the text, how might I tell the difference between what it says and what my unavoidable prejudices dupe me into believing it says?

Palmer's preliminary answer to the question of what a critic should do with a text is "listen to its voice." To treat a text as a natural object which can be weighed, measured and dissected is to ignore the quintessential difference between a natural object and a work of man. A verbal work is a "voice," not a "thing." The tendency to consider words as "things" probably originated with the advent of the written, as opposed to the spoken, word.[5] Language existed as an oral and gesticulatory phenomenon long before it came to be written: written language arose mostly as a more permanent copy of spoken language.[6] Even now, written language (with a few specific exceptions) carries in it an immediate transferability to spoken language.

Palmer carried the idea of a text being a voice even further than mere listening. With Gadamer, he proposed entering into a dialogue (though not necessarily out loud) with the work, and he meant by dialogue not just extracting from the text answers to the critic's questions, but also allowing the text to question the critic. The interpreter must allow himself to be "led by the text." The dialogue takes place between the text and the critic's prestructuring: the critic tries to get behind the text (to the situation that called it into existence) while the text tries to get behind the critic's prestructuring. This method for Gadamer, is the only way to arrive at "understanding" the text.

But what, if anything, does all this theory do for rhetorical criticism? Well, first of all, Gadamer's analysis affirms that understanding comes to us as an experience and not as a cold-blooded toting up of the results of exhaustive analysis. Although analysis may assist interpretation, they are not the same things, Gadamer insists that interpretation, rather than intricate analysis, is the proper job of the critic. Second, his "philosophical hermeneutics" can provide a more secure philosophical foundation in which to ground rhetorical criticism than is furnished by a string of unexamined *a priori* assumptions.

For all that phenomenological hermeneutics might assist the task of rhetorical criticism, there is one concept central to Gadamer's critique of prevailing critical modes which appears to undermine the rhetorical approach to discourse and literature, namely his critique

[5] Albert Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (New York: Atheneum, 1965), especially pp. 26-29.

[6] *Ibid.*

of metho ology."[7] After all, rhetorical criticism *is* a method (or several methods), and method is anathema to Gadamer. Palmer goes further to criticize rhetorical critics specifically, in an article he published prior to completing *Hermeneutics*. He claims that rhetorical critics "approach all texts with a checklist of questions about paradox, irony, imagery, a basic plot, etc."[8] Even though some bad rhetorical criticism may have been practiced in this manner, Palmer clearly misunderstands (or misrepresents) the rhetorical method. Nevertheless, rhetorical criticism must, as a method, defend itself against the charge that it, like all methods, has a tendency to "structure the answers in advance to fit the question."[9]

I am suggesting that a defense against that charge, and a basis for a *rapprochement* between rhetoricians and the questions Gadamer poses through Palmer lies in the fact that rhetorical criticism is pre-eminently a dialectical method. At the beginning of this paper I quoted the Committee on Rhetorical Criticism to the effect that the rhetorical critic shall be known by the kinds of questions he asks. What kinds are these? Well, they are mostly variations on, "What is this text saying to me as an audience?", or "What change is this work trying to produce in me?" In other words the rhetorical critic sees himself as the "object" being addressed by the "voice" of the text, thereby breaking up the "realistic" subject-object schema of New Criticism and entering into a dialogue with the text which lets the work set up the grounds on which it is to be understood. This is most certainly a stance of which Gadamer would approve.

In an early chapter Palmer points out the utility of the practice of oral interpretation in the attempt to hear the voice of the work, and he appropriately emphasizes the mutually reinforcing quality of the interchange between intellectual understanding and physical understanding in oral interpretation. Anyone who has done a fair amount of oral interpretation would probably consider Palmer's observation self-evident, but speech departments in this country have not recognized any particularly close relationship between rhetorical criticism and oral interpretation. If phenomenological hermeneutics does nothing more than emphasize the need for a closer liaison between rhetorical criticism and oral interpretation – a liaison from which both activities cannot help but benefit – then it will have done rhetorical criticism a valuable service.[10]

[7] Palmer, *Hermeneutics*, p. 9.

[8] Richard E. Palmer, "Towards a Broader Concept of Interpretation: A Programmatic Essay," *Illinois Speech News*, 21, (November 1967), 10.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 9.

[10] Palmer seems to believe that his concern with the "voice" of a work is an extension of Gadamer's theory. However, E.D. Hirsch, in his book *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), p. 248, quotes from *Warheit und Methode* as follows: "It seems to us to be the distinguishing feature and dignity of literary art that in it language is not speech. That is to say, while remaining independent of all relations of speaking, or being addressed, or going persuaded, it still possesses meaning and form" (p. 177); and, "Actually the condition of being written down is central to the hermeneutical phenomenon because the detachment of a written text from a writer or author as well as from any particular addressee or reader gives it an existence of its own" (p. 369). If these comments represent Gadamer's position, then Palmer's interest in the voice of a work as a guide for interpretation constitutes a modification of Gadamer's thought rather than an extension of it. Still, it is easy to see why Palmer (perhaps unconsciously) neglected Gadamer's explicit statements: the direction of Gadamer's theory-as-a-whole seems to point to literature's oral dimension rather than its graphic dimension. So, in the end, there is good reason to believe that the rhetorical critic can benefit more from the insights of phenomenological hermeneutics via Palmer's version of them than via Gadamer's original version.

READER'S DIGEST RHETORIC: HOW SWEET IT IS

by

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Beginning speech students who use the *Reader's Digest* as a reference often learn from their instructors that they have erred; in fact, if it were not for politeness, the instructors would probably unleash invective at such references. However, others feel differently about the *Digest*, including Pope John, who praised the editors, saying, "How comforting it will be for you, when you come to the close of your lives on earth, to be able to say to yourselves: We have served the truth."[1] With this discrepancy of attitudes existing, and because over 100 million people read the *Digest* every month, I felt the need to consider what kind of "truth" the *Digest* publishes.[2] Therefore, I examined a five-month run of the *Digest*,[3] and found that its "truth" can best be understood by identifying first the *Digest* world and second the technique (or techniques) used to promote this world.

The Digest World

The *Digest* world can almost be summarized in one word: bliss. "Almost" creeps in because however slightly, a few evils taint the *Digest* world; but in general, "the *Digest* often presents a better, simpler, happier world than, in the experience of most, exists outside its pages."[4] The rosy bliss and minor thorns of the *Digest* world can be seen in four major categories of articles: adventure and the great outdoors, medical health, inspiration and human goodness, and evil.

First, adventure and the great outdoors abound in the *Digest* world, often through a medium called "Armchair Travellogue" and also by means of various articles on animals. The typical "Armchair Travellogue" takes the reader through a state, "Vermont: Of Green, Glory, and Granite" (July 70) or "Rugged Idaho" (Aug. 70), or on a grander scale, the continent of Australia: "Inside Down Under" (Oct. 70). Usually there is one animal article in each *Digest*, such as "The Magnificent Tiger" (July 70), "The Lesson of the Lemmings" (Aug. 70), or "The Year of the Seal" (Oct. 70). Perhaps the significance of this class of article lies in the *Digest's* being "aware of the widespread human liking for accumulating unusual facts:" the reader learns that although Idaho produces 100 million dollars a year in potatoes, it profits more on cattle – 150 million – and he finds out that a tiger consumes 40 to 70 pounds of meat at a meal.[5] The animal articles are also used as a means for dealing with sex, *Digest* style: "He trundles up, sniffs and gives a low snort of excitement. She responds with a hiss. How the pair circle and joust in a clumsy dance. They rub noses repeatedly . . . she bites his neck and lower jaw . . . he roars and chuckles . . . she allows him to mount her, dog-fashion."

This is not pornographer Russ Meyer's latest, but a description of the courtship of the Golden Seal (Oct. 70). Whether the subject involves insightful trivia or surrogate sex, an unabashed, "gee whiz, the wonder of it all" spirit pervades these articles.[6]

Similarly, the medical health articles supply the reader with a steady stream of facts. In addition to a regularly appearing "New from the World of Medicine"

[1] David Ogilvy in James Wood, *Of Lasting Interest* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1967), p. 216.

[2] Readership figure was found in Wood, *Lasting Interest*, p. vii.

[3] The original draft of this paper was written in the Fall of 1970; this accounts for the dates of the *Digest* issues chosen. However, to check the consistency of the *Digest*, recent examples of articles will be cited in the paper. Issues studied for the original draft were July, August, September, October, and November, 1970.

[4] *Lasting Interest*, p. 106.

[5] James Wood, *Magazines in the United States* (New York, N.Y.: Ronald Press, 1956), p. 227.

[6] Recent articles on the subject have included "New Hampshire: Seedbed of History" (Mar. 72), "The Magic of Ski-Touring" (Feb. 72), and "Washington: A State for All Seasons" (Dec. 71).

department, the *Digest* has a continuing series on anatomy – "I am Joe's Man-Gland" (Nov. 70), "I am Joe's Foot" (Sept. 70) – and feature articles on medical breakthroughs such as "L-Dopa has Set Me Free" (Aug. 70), in which a victim of Parkinson's Disease discusses a new drug which has helped him.[7] As has been noted already, these articles, too, give the reader more interesting facts and a bit of sex ("Joe's Man-Gland"). They also appeal to a possible weakness in the readers, because the articles, particularly those on "breakthroughs," are psychologically analogous to old-fashioned patent medicine remedies. One writer has described the analogy in this way: "What are comparable are the psychological needs to which both the articles are patent-medicine advertisements appeal . . . the ways in which diseases can be avoided or cured are of perennial interest to everyone. It is not an interest which the *Digest* slights."[8]

Earthy subjects such as sex and the outdoors are transcended by a third category of articles devoted to inspirational and sentimental stories of unmitigated human goodness. These articles come neatly labeled as "First Person Awards" and "Dramas in Real Life," in addition to other tales of wonder. Often the articles contain conspicuous streaks of evangelism (which is due to the influence of *Digest* founder, editor, and publisher DeWitt Wallace, whose father was a minister and president of a Presbyterian college). A typical example is "Answer at Nightfall" (Sept. 70) in which, through the death of a pelican, a young girl's face reflects a Spiritual Lesson: "She nodded slowly, eyes shadowed with the mystery and miracle of death and life . . . He [the pelican] was back where he wanted to be, wasn't he? And he *is* still part of it all, isn't he?" A bit more overt is "Hello There, Brendan Behan Zuckerman" (Sept. 70), in which a godfather talks to a newborn, and proudly renounces the secular for the theological. He says, "It's magic. To be alive is *magic* . . . Yvonne and David decided you were going to be a boy five months before you were born. I lectured them: even science doesn't know whether a baby will be a boy or a girl. *But David and Yvonne knew.* How? Magic . . . *Hello, Brendan. Welcome to God's Magic Show.*" Even the casual reader can understand why a minister has labeled the *Digest* "a gold mine of sermonic material for the up-to-date minister."[10] Of a less homiletic strain are articles such as "Hey, Hero" (Sept. 70), the story of a navy nurse who worked in an amputee ward, and concluded, "What I learned from those brave young men I'll never be able to measure. But I know this: sharing their triumphs and defeats taught me humility, an acceptance of the cards as they are dealt, and a greater love of life itself." This category of articles is quintessential *Reader's Digest:* life is wonderful and mystically simple.[11]

Tainting the *Digest* world, though, is a final category of articles on evils which the *Digest* attempts to purge. The *Digest* has long been known for its anti-smoking crusade, and though the anti-smoking articles are not so numerous now, there are several other major crusades which the *Digest* is waging. Among them are safe driving, more intelligent environmental use, and an assault on organized crime; but for the sake of brevity, only two of the more controversial crusades will be described here.

Exposés on governmental inefficiency are frequently printed in the *Digest:* in the issues sampled, there were five such exposés, three of which were written by roving editors of the *Digest* (the significance of which will be considered later). Typical of the exposés is an article which asks the question: "What Hope of Reforming Federal Spending?" (July 70). The author deplores what he feels to be endless spending that is "borne out of the government's vast bureaucracy," (although he finds no fault with the 84 billion dollar defense budget of that year). Characteristic of government exposés is a theme of the inefficiency of big government; the *Digest* has long pursued a peculiar type of populism in which the "bad guy" is big government.

Probably the most nefarious of all evils seen by the *Digest* is communism – in just five issues there were ten articles decrying communist life and military strategy. Epitomizing this type of article is a piece entitled "President Nixon, Cambodia, and New Chances for Peace" (July 70), written by a roving editor for the *Digest*. The article is intensely supportive of Nixon's move into Cambodia, and includes quotations by Nixon such as "I have to do what I think is right for America." The author of the article reveals what might seem to be a talent for hyperbole; after comparing Nixon's Cambodian decision to the decisions to enter into World

[7] In the past, the *Digest* has not fared well with some "medical" articles: in addition to articles on cures for arthritis, syphillis, and tuberculosis which were strongly rejected by the medical profession (see John Bainbridge, *Little Wonder*, New York, N.Y.: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1946, pp. 161–66), the *Digest* published an article on curing athlete's foot (May 1942), heralding a cure which one woman tried that put her in a hospital for two weeks (*Ibid.*).

[8] Wood, *Lasting Interest*, p. 227. Joe's anatomy continues to be explored in recent issues – "I Am Joe's Eye" (Mar. 72), "I Am Joe's Eyetooth" (Feb. 72); a breakthrough reported in recent months was "Orthotherapy: New Help for Your Aches and Pains" (Feb. 72).

[10] Bainbridge, *Little Wonder*, p. 136.

[11] Recent examples include "Seven Words to Live By" (Feb. 72), "The Power of Patience" (Apr. 72), and "Words to Warm the Heart" (Mar. 72).

Wars One and Two, and to the Cuban missile crisis decision by Kennedy, he concludes that Nixon's decision "may well have been the most difficult of them all." The author further concludes that "properly viewed . . . Americans have reason to cheer for the Cambodian operation, not to cavil at it." It is interesting to note that the *Digest's* anti-communism crusade is in at least its 25th year, one of the first of such articles having appeared in August of 1947, entitled "The First Democracy Destroyed by Communism."[12]

Promotion of the Digest's World

The dominant goods and minor evils of the *Digest* world have been identified. It is now instructive to consider the major technique by which the *Digest* promulgates its viewpoint. This technique is based on the fact that "*Digest* editors seek to find or fashion pieces that have 'applicability.' "[13]

But as a background to the technique it is useful to consider the main architect: *Digest* editor-in-chief DeWitt Wallace, whose goal it is to "promote a Better America, with capital letters, with a fuller life for all."[14] An extremely able man, his success has been explained as the result of being an "everyman – with everyman's hopes and desires, everyman's beliefs and grievances, everyman's sense of humor."[15] Also, he has the ability *not* to be an ordinary newsman, because "the ordinary newspaperman . . . is always looking for bugs under the leaves. Wallace just looks at the leaves and thinks they're lovely, and so do his readers."[16]

To Wallace's readers, the *Digest* should appear to be a balanced view of the publishing world – after all, it is a "digest," with articles that are "condensed" from such important periodicals as *Life*, *Time*, and *U.S. News and World Report*. But this ostensibly balanced view is actually peculiar to the *Digest's* editors, because when they cannot "find" enough "applicable" articles (which apparently happens rather frequently), the editors indeed "fashion" articles of their own design – in fact, since 1939, this "fashioning" has occurred with around 58 percent of the *Digest's* articles.[17] This shaping takes two forms: first, there are original articles which are written for and appear only in the *Digest;* second, there are "planted" original articles written by authors paid by the *Digest*, but which are first published in other magazines and then reprinted in the *Digest*. In the five month run, most closely scrutinized for this paper, the *Digest* published an original article content that was at least the 58 percent referred to above, the significance of which is the crux of the technique: the *Digest* is not really a "digest."[18] This means that while presenting the facade of a balanced view, the *Digest* is actually presenting the editors' viewpoint, a fact which can be seen better nowhere than in the articles on communism in government: three of five of the expose articles were originals, and nine of the ten communism articles were originals. That these articles represent a "balanced view" primarily of the editors becomes even more clear when one realizes that nine of the above fifteen articles were actually *written* by *Digest* editors.

Summary and Conclusions

The *Digest* world has been found to consist of articles on adventure and the great outdoors, which provide the reader with memorable facts and surrogate sex; medical health, which furnish bodily and "breakthrough" facts, and provide comfort in a way similar to patent remedy medicines; spiritual human goodness, which inspire the reader; and evil, which warn of big government and communism. This world is promoted by means of a technique that creates a facade of a literary "digest," the basic assumptions and materials of which are largely supplied by the editors of the *Digest*, especially DeWitt Wallace.

This paper helps to explain the aforementioned conflict between speech instructors and others whose attitudes are similar to Pope John. On an emotional level, many liberal speech instructors dislike the *Digest* for its conservative social and political views; but on a more logical level, this paper has shown that the *Digest* can be criticized for its limited, biased viewpoint which is misleadingly promoted as a "digest." On the other side, when the *Digest's* world is identified and understood, one can comprehend why Pope John and 100 million others enjoy the *Digest* – after all, who would not want to feel more secure and satisfied, and believe that the world is essentially a mystically simple, fascinating, and wonderful place?

[12] Big government and communism continue to be included on the *Digest's* pages; recent issues contain "What's Wrong with our Federal Bureaucracy (Apr. 72), "What to do if you Disagree with the IRS" (Mar. 72), "Soviet Strategy in the Indian Ocean" (Apr. 72), and "Toward a Generation of Peace," by Richard Nixon (Feb. 72).

[13] Wood, *Lasting Interest*, p. 107.

[14] Bainbridge, *Little Wonder*, p. 106.

[15] Wood, *Lasting Interest*, p. 237.

[16] *Ibid.*

[17] Out of 137 articles, approximately 43% (60) were "unplanted" originals; judging from the 43% planted rate of the past and the number of current "reprinted" articles from magazines with which the *Digest* has had planting "relations," or "special arrangements" (see Bainbridge, *Little Wonder*, pp. 62–3), I would estimate the figure to be at least the 58% rate of the past. At any rate, an original content of over 50% renders the balanced "digest" theory suspect.